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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on Contemporary
Forms of Slavery
Nineteenth session
25 April-4 May 1994
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER FIELDS OF CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Note by the Secretary-General

Information submitted by the International Criminal
Police Organization (ICPO-Interpol)

INTERPOL

[Original: French]
[18 August 1993]

The General Secretariat of ICPO-Interpol, in a circular of 11 February 1993, carried out its routine consultation of National Central Bureaux on cases of slavery and slavery-like practices which might have come to their attention in the course of 1992.

At 17 August 1993, replies had been received from the following 56 countries or territories:

Andorra, Argentina, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cyprus, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary,

India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mexico, Mozambique, Nauru, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Swaziland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Of the 56 countries or territories mentioned above, 55 indicate that no case of slavery or slavery-like practices was registered by the police in the course of the year 1992.

However, the National Central Bureau of the United States of America reports nine cases classified at the federal level relating to slavery-like practices or the status of bondage. Two of these cases concerned the exploitation of migrant workers in an irregular situation.

Nevertheless, information was provided by a number of countries.

For instance, the National Central Bureau of Benin indicates that slavery and the slave trade have ceased to exist in Benin but that certain institutions and practices that may correspond to the definition of the status of bondage continue to be current in certain localities in the country, mainly rural areas.

The National Central Bureau of France reports that it has not had occasion to take cognizance of cases relating to slavery or similar practices. However, some serious breaches of the legislation on working conditions committed in clandestine work facilities or against migrant workers in an irregular situation may be equated with them.

New criminal legislation has been adopted in France in order to punish the exploitation of a person's work by taking advantage of his vulnerability and his situation of dependence (article 225-13 of the Penal Code) and the act of subjecting such a person to conditions of work or accommodation incompatible with human dignity (article 225-14 of the Penal Code).

The Central Bureau of Gabon has not registered any practice of slavery or any similar practice. However, certain situations in which minors are compelled to work are currently under investigation by the Gabonese authorities.